

# Parramatta Park to score pedestrian bridges, completion of People's Loop

Pedestrian bridges and a performance venue have been proposed for the two million visitors that use Parramatta Park each year but critics fear the site is being commercialised.

**Joanne Vella**

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An artist's impression of one of a pedestrian and cyclist bridge to connect Little Coogee at Parramatta Park to near CommBank Stadium.

## **Parramatta**

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The Liberals are determined to keep Parramatta in blue control with a \$56m makeover for its green oasis, Parramatta Park, where two more pedestrian bridges and a completion of a 3.2km trail are promised.

As part of WestInvest funding, Active Transport Minister Rob Stokes and Treasurer Matt Kean said a 45m bridge would traverse Little Coogee to make it easier to walk or ride between the park, CommBank Stadium and Parramatta CBD.

Another bridge would be 90m and link the park with the stadium.

Money would also be pumped into the completion of the 3.2km People's Loop, which would include extra parking bays and access points through the 87-hectare park.

The link between Old Government House and the Parramatta River would also be reinstated "with an uninterrupted walk through the old gatehouse along George St" if the Liberals were returned to power.

Wistaria Gardens and Glengarriff House would also be restored with the funding.



Part of the People's loop near Queens Rd, Westmead.

Parramatta Park welcomes two million visitors each year – a figure that is expected to grow 65 per cent by 2036.

Greater Sydney Parklands will deliver the infrastructure over the next five years in consultation with the community, subject to the Liberals winning the March 25 poll.

The government pledge came just days after Business Western Sydney pitched permanent performance shells for The Crescent in Parramatta Park, The Domain and Thompsons Creek Regional Parkland at Bradfield in the city's southwest.



Bridges planned for Parramatta Park are marked as 23 (near Little Coogee) and 24 (CommBank Stadium).

Business Western Sydney executive director David Borger said the shells would revitalise Sydney's outdoor entertainment scene, generate more than 2300 permanent jobs and pump \$450m into the economy every year.

The chamber and Cedar Mill Group will put forward a business case which will outline Sydney's "dire need" for permanent entertainment offerings.

The structures, such as Melbourne's Sidney Myer Music Bowl and Brisbane's Riverstage, are acoustic, hi-tech soundshells designed to improve the sound and clarity of performances, and can fill a void between theatres.

Mr Borger said a shell at Parramatta Park would complement [Parramatta River's evolving cultural precinct](#), which includes the Riverside Theatres' redevelopment and Powerhouse Museum.

"A performance shell in the Crescent outdoor space in Parramatta Park is a much-needed addition to Australia's fastest-growing city, Parramatta," he said.

However, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group spokeswoman Suzette Meade said it feared the park was being commercialised and the shell should be relocated to Camellia.



A proposed performance shell, which Business Western Sydney would like for Parramatta Park.

“The Crescent is a nationally-significant site for Dharug people and site of the first colonial orchid that saved the colony from starvation,” she said.

“World Heritage listing will be compromised and so will any suggested long term structure with heritage restrictions.”

She said a similar push was made for a music bowl in Parramatta Park in the 1980s before the community and National Trust “passionately fought” it off.

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“We urge urban planners to decentralise new facilities for the rapidly expanding second city and consider the new Camellia development behind Rosehill Racecourse as a site for a permanent music bowl,” she said.

Ms Meade also dismissed the need for more pedestrian bridges in the park and called on the government to increase the parklands back to its original size by incorporating the 26ha North Parramatta heritage precinct.